

DESIGN WITHOUT AUTHORITY

"Design Without Authority" speaks to autonomous action, and building without authority in architecture and design. The project borrows lessons from an ad hoc approach often seen in both urban and rural environments, where an abundance of improvised decisions, broken rules, unauthorized additions and constructions participate in the realization of the built environment. Can tacit architectural knowledge become ubiquitous, entering everyday life?

The outdated idea of a visionary master builder who single-handedly tackles challenges and rescues the world is no longer relevant. Design Without Authority posits a world in which the builder-architect-user are conflated and explores constructs realized by individuals afforded agency over the design process.

Today, the majority of people are disconnected from the design and production of the physical artifacts that participate in their lives. Exceptions can be found in urban squatting, activist architecture, DIY manuals, and self-assembly mechanisms. The work presented in this exhibition will question the relationship between top-down, controlled visions of authorities such as architects, planners, and governments, and propose a model that embraces improvisation, irreverence and unpredictability that introduces make-do in architecture.

For over 40 years ABC No Rio has been a place where people share resources and ideas to impact society, culture and community in an atmosphere of camaraderie and mutual support. ABC No Rio's gallery and performance space was founded by artists committed to an actively engaged culture that promotes critical analysis and an expanded vision of possibility for our lives and for our neighborhoods, cities, and societies. ABC No Rio has retained these values to the present.

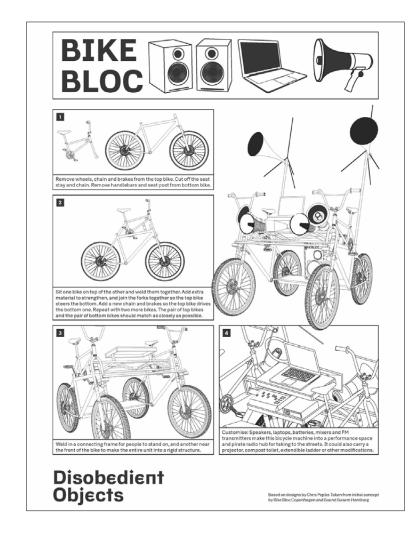
In 2017 ABC No Rio vacated its building on Rivington Street in advance of demolition and the construction of its new building. In the current period ABC No Rio continues its work "in exile" at other venues and in collaboration with other organizations. ABC No Rio in Exile provides a renewed orientation towards collaborative work that brings it back to its roots — ABC No Rio was founded by the 1970s artist group Collaborative Projects.

CATHERINE GRAU + NATHAN KENSINGER FLY **GREEN OASIS GARDEN GEORGE BLISS GUERILLA GRAYWATER GIRLS** HACKETT JOHN SZOT KOTTI & Co. LIFE IS FREE LOT-EK MARWAN KAABOUR MOHAMAD NAHLEH **NINA COOKE JOHN NOF NATHANSOHN** ROSS MARTIN/LA PLAZA CULTURAL SEEDHEAD XAVIER DELORY

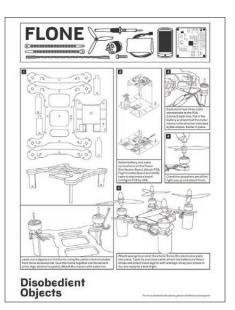


<u>Marwan</u> Kaabour How-To Guides originally included as free takeaways in "Disobedient Objects," a landmark exhibition in 2013, at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The exhibition was the first to examine the powerful role of objects in movements for social change.

Disobedient objects are often everyday items that have been turned to a new purpose. But social change is about making as much as breaking. Sometimes designing a new object creates a new way to disobey.











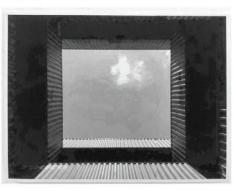
LOT-EK

STACK / CUT is a project to inventory and to exhaust all the possible configurations to form volume and space out of shipping containers.

STACK / CUT is a vast study that begins with set parameters. Part discovery, part reflection and rumination on the way we worked till now—why and how we do what we do—this conceptual study aims to investigate and record all variations within those given parameters, and in doing so to create the imaginary landscape that our past and future projects inhabit, each one a precise selection, extracted from its larger family and logic, and frozen in its specific configuration.

STACK / CUT is LOT-EK's alphabet, dictionary, encyclopedia, but also LOT-EK's catalog. Totally conceptual yet instrumental to the practice, the project is abstract and applicable at once, a real compendium, an index or a manual for the work done and the one to come.

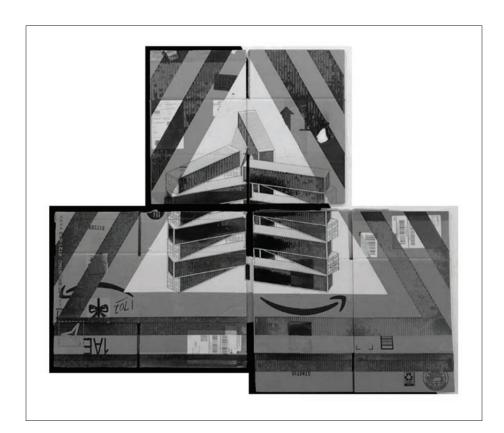




STACK/SQUARE#1



STACK/ROTATE END90



STACK/ROTATE30 TRIANGLE

3-The Gecekondu Protest Hut.

Kotti & Co. (This text has been originally published in The Funambulist #23, Insurgent Architectures")

One of the decisive problems of urban development in large, growing German cities like Berlin is the housing shortage for people with low and middle incomes, along with intensified conditions affecting the development of the housing market such as rising rents, forced evictions, and displacement mechanisms. While the Federal government as well as municipal agencies believe that constructing new housing projects is the solution and therefore shape policies accordingly, social activists as well as academic researchers agree: that the construction of new buildings does not solve but perpetuate the housing question. The rent of a new apartment is always considerably higher than the rent of an existing apartment; the value of newly constructed property is always higher than that of existing property, and, due to the tenancy law in Germany, rents and values of existing housing stock gradually increase as a consequence. This dynamic particularly aggravates the precarious situation of low income tenants. At the same time, processes of urban segregation and living conditions for social housing tenants also worsen because of legal mechanisms that contribute to the shrinking of social housing stock by means of privatization. commodification, and financialization. Such a structural, large-scale problem that continues to be ignored by most political parties leaves those dependent on social housing unheard and unseen.

The Gecekondu is the protest hut of the social housing initiative Kotti & Co at Kottbusser Tor in Berlin-Kreuzberg that renders their concerns visible and heard and makes the struggle of many accessible and concrete. Kotti & Co understood that change has to be systematic. large-scale and needs to intervene in the legal structures of tenancy and social housing laws. But most importantly, that this change should address the needs of the many, of the Other, of the marginalized. But before we can understand the particular intersection between spatial and political action that Kotti & Co has practiced since 2011, we have to briefly retrace the post-war conception of social housing in the German context.

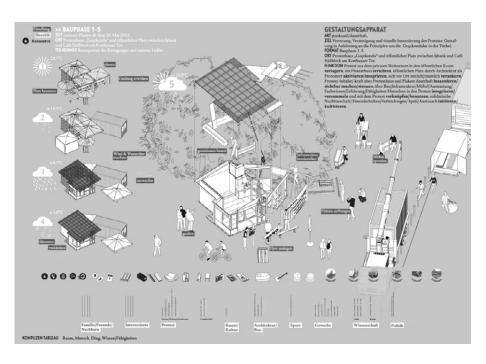
The name of the protest hut stems from the Gecekondular, informal buildings and settlements in Turkey built on public land, which are tolerated based on the customary law that completed houses may not be demolished. This is why they are erected overnight: in Turkish language "Gecekondu" means "built overnight". On the one hand it was an affirmation of the history and knowledge of the Turkish community, as Sandy Kaltenborn noted, on the other, it was a strong gesture on the level of representation. But also

on the structural level there are similarities: while the Gecekondu of Kotti & Co did literally emerge overnight, it has been evolving and transforming for almost seven years now. Also, it is tolerated by the authorities, not legalized, based on convincing relevant actors from the administration. This includes involving the mayor of the district among others, inviting new actors when administration changes, making sure they understand that this community is serious and not acting in self-interest but for the common good - for the right to social housing, the right to the city, to the neighborhood, to everything

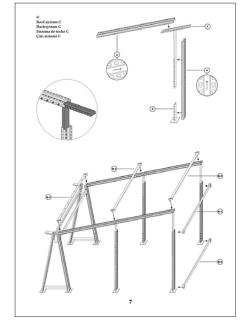
residents have paid for, made and built. Almost seven years after construction, we can now speak to the resilience of an informal structure based on an approved practice of commons and socialization of space the Gecekondu helped construct a kind of "custom," productive yet critical engagement between public authorities and a collective of social housing residents. In contrast to the status quo of public-private partnership that turned housing into a commodity, this public-collective partnership strives for housing as a collective right.

-Niloufar Tajeri









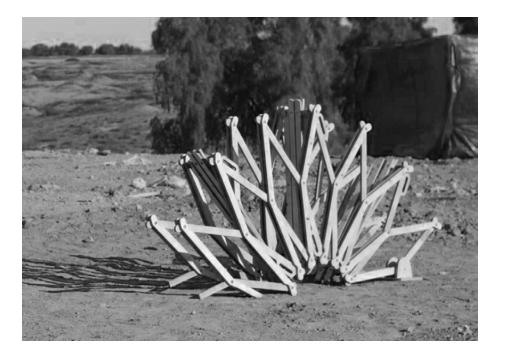


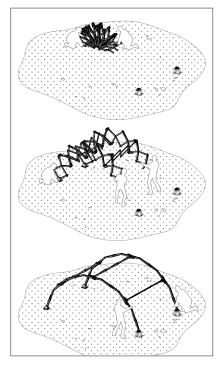
<u>Nof</u> <u>Nathansohn</u> Design team: Molly Mason, David Allen White, Hugh Timothy Ebdy, Yaara Yacoby and Hila Sharabi

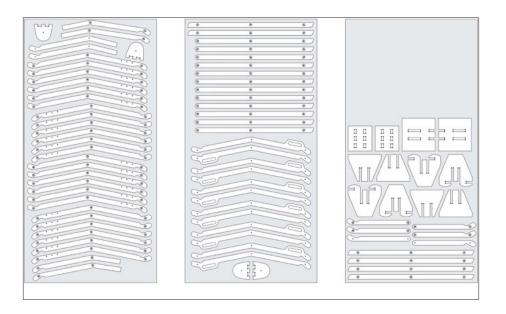
For political reasons, the officially unrecognized Bedouin village of Al Araqib in Israeli's Negev desert is prevented from building permanent structures. While the state of Israel does not issue demolition warrants for new illegal houses, it instead demolishes these houses without a warrant, under the auspices of a law that allows the police to destroy new illegal structures within 30 days of construction.

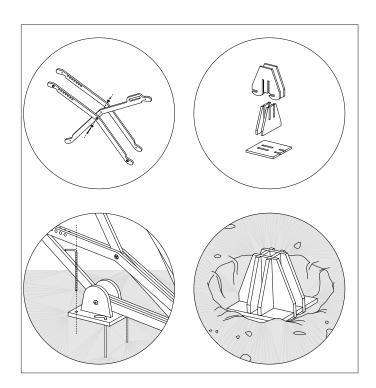
This situation has encouraged the people of Al Araqib to become familiar with specific useful technologies. They use solar energy to provide electricity to the village, and smartphones to document and report demolitions. As an act of resistance as much as a practical measure, they repeatedly rebuild their houses, appropriating architecture as a political tool. This creates a situation where the Bedouin with their strong nomadic history, uses physical permanent structures—the language and logic used by their oppressors—in the fight for their ancestral land.

Beyond supporting and recognizing the Bedouin people's fight for justice, this work asks toharness the conflux of physical architecture and digital technologies in an effort to create innovative modes of communication that speak to the experiences of unrecognized populations, struggling for cultural survival. Specifically, through collaborative work by the people of Al Aragib, this work initiates a laboratory of tools and techniques that harness the spatial characteristics of the land and the social narrative of its people. Aiming to strengthen their ability to communicate more widely and more productively, the project proposes a platform that includes a set of digital and physical tools, and catalogues these diverse tools as part of a 'cookbook' composed of spatial information, automated and visualized to create a more persuasive narrative, and of iournalistic strategies that introduce knowledge sharing and evidence of the reality of demolition and its impact on human lives.











George Bliss

Earth Station

Hurricane/Flood/Fire-proof underground
"campground"/"transition community."

Water-proof shipping containers are suspended from dumpsters and joined together in a circular ditch, then surrounded by gravel for drainage. The shared "under-space" including library, work-space, play rooms, storage, etc- is naturally cool in summer and warm in winter.

Ground-level dumpsters are filled with excavated soil to form green berms between campsites, or tented over to make greenhouses and workshops.

Tensegrity Tipi

Two story tent for temporary or seasonal shelter. Hurricane/flood-proof. Inspired by Buckminster Fuller's aluminum Dymaxion House. This is a tensegrity structure, like a bicycle wheel, extremely strong for its weight. Portable as a kit. Hoist the tipi up the mast. Assemble in two days. Minimal wood (the frame is alu. 2"x2": skins are urethane/vinyl coated fabric on steel cables.

In a flood, move to the upper level, roll up the side panels and let the water flow through. The Hexagonal shape allows for nesting arrangements to make larger shelters.











A device that attaches to street infrastructure to get voltage power.

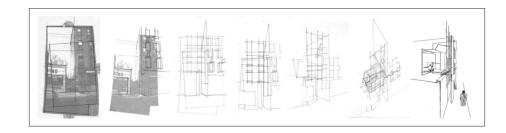
<u> Hackett</u>



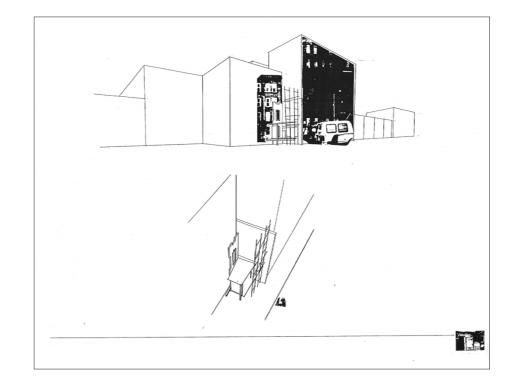


<u>Nina</u> <u>Cooke</u> John The Urban Porch project uses ideas of tactical appropriation to explore empowerment and urban public space. It searches for an architectural practice that deliberately carves out space for the disadvantaged and the displaced. It explores the in-betweenness of the West Indian community in the Bronx and Brooklyn. These immigrants rejected assimilation. For them, assimilation would mean joining the lowest ranks of the social hierarchy reserved for American Blacks. By maintaining their otherness, they hoped to remain just one rung above African Americans.

In his article "Multiplicity of Black Narratives..." Tommy E states: "Adichie's Americanah challenges typical representations of race in America, and, resultantly, highlights many blinds spots or simplified ideas about race that I (and anyone attempting to view others complexly) must actively reexamine and transcend." It is this blind-spot, the space of the "in-between" that the West Indian immigrant occupies. Leftover spaces throughout neighborhoods in the Bronx and Brooklyn are reclaimed for the community. Spaces in which they can perform cultural activities that connect them to home while they are firmly rooted in New York City.







8-En-Counters in Karm El-Zeitoun in Beirut

Mohamad Nahleh

On a Staircase in Beirut chronicles the story of a single, vibrant blue staircase; designed as an inclusive public space for Karm El-Zeitoun-one of Beirut's oldest informal neighborhoods. Upon installation in June 2018, a series of steps and viewing decks offered glimpses of life beyond the neighborhood's massive flyover and were, at first, animated by the activity and leisure of an exceptionally diverse community of residents. But the novelty of these solidarities faded shortly after, and the staircase ultimately surrendered to the blatant racism. sectarianism, and xenophobia forced upon it by its neighbors. Abandoned by those it claimed to serve, it perpetuated and exaggerated the conditions it was supposed to alleviate. The story it wanted to tell was completely rewritten. Its structure was locked, its function altered, and the history of its own potted olive tree was weaponized against it. A hazard to everyone around it, not even the Beirut port blast in August 2020 would be enough to reconcile the hostilities now embodied by the structure. The story of the staircase traces the evolving tension between narratives intended by the architect (the alluring story of a 'social' project) and the narratives of those living around the staircase itself.











9-ALL OVER - Removal

Xavier Delory The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, clad entirely by tags and graffiti according to the "all-over" principle, forms an abstract expressionist fresco in its entirety.

This creation echoes Frank Lloyd Wright's concept of organic architecture, a concept according to which architecture must take into account its geographical and cultural context. (In opposition to the above-ground theory of the European Modernists of the 1920s.) The digital intervention of the museum resonates with the Guggenheim Museum's collection of abstract art and more particularly with the works of Jackson Pollock discovered by Peggy Guggenheim in the 1940s. This creation is also a nod to the New York graffiti artists who popularized street-art in the 1970's.





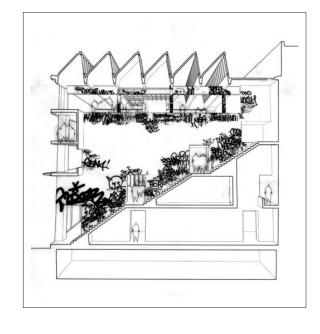


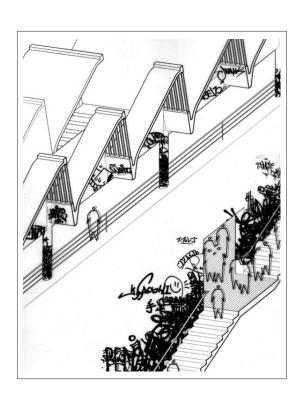


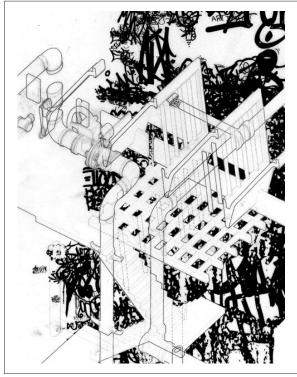


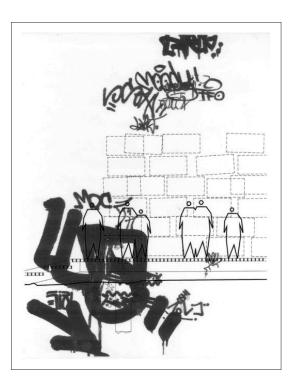
<u>John</u> Szot

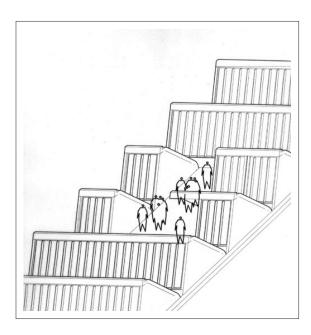
In this building proposal, a partiallycompleted building is temporarily abandoned and left at the mercy of New York City's street writers and guerrilla artists to be provisionally occupied and abused without supervision. By exposing the raw structure to all the violence and rambunctiousness of a metropolis, this experiment allows us to capture activity and ideas that usually lie beyond the architect's grasp in a manner that does not compromise their cultural currency. The result is an authentic slice of urban subculture that occupies a legitimate position within the urban fabric, and thus within the identity of the city. This is an inversion of the typical life cycle of a building. Here. dereliction occurs before inhabitation. Therefore the final product remains unknown and outside the reach of conventional architectural documentation. In order to bring some degree of insight into the process during design development, the entire structure was subjected to a simulation in which a narrative was developed to describe the activity that might take place during the period of 'induced dereliction' and do justice to the subtleties inherent in this unlikely marriage.











11-Chance Ecologies

Catherine Grau + Nathan Kensinger Chance Ecologies is a curatorial framework for artistic gestures and research projects exploring ecosystems found in abandoned spaces, post industrial sites, and landfills in New York City. The main trajectories of this project are to create research and discourse around the value of wild, unmanaged spaces in the urban environment at a time of continued rampant development and capital-driven land management, and to creatively articulate visions for the future of native and non-native species.

Chance Ecologies was created in 2015 by Catherine Grau, Nathan Kensinger and Stephen Zacks, and has invited dozens of artists to creatively engage the post-industrial waterfront of Queens, New York. Their work has included seed collecting, interactive mapping, experimental filmmaking, a pirate radio station, a guerrilla archaeological dig, and other unauthorized public participatory actions in off-limits areas. The artworks created by Chance Ecologies have helped to capture the story of endangered landscapes and species, as the city's last unprotected pockets of unmanaged wilderness are turned over to developers and bulldozed.

Following the arrival of European settlercolonizers in the 1600's, the Queens waterfront was reshaped by successive waves of development and redevelopment, creating an entirely new urban coastline. Once a series of natural ecosystems, lined with streams and rivers, wetlands and forests, the shoreline is now home to power plants, highways, airports, landfills, and new residential and commercial towers. However, several sections of this man-made waterfront have been temporarily reclaimed by nature, hovering between waves of development and real estate speculation, and have become unplanned green spaces. These unmanaged meadows, glens and marshes support a diversity of life not found in the city's official parks, providing an important habitat for wild species of birds, insects, trees and flowers, and upending our assumptions of human dominance in the city.

Chance Ecologies opens up the complex dialogues about the importance of these overlooked spaces by inviting artists and community members to creatively engage with them, both in person and in exhibits at museums and galleries. Chance Ecologies extensive, ongoing research and fieldwork explores the varieties of life found in these sites, while also articulating a deeper understanding of how the environment has been and continues to be radically reshaped by human impacts, including globalization and climate change. By bringing members of the public to these remote areas, to creatively engage with these artistic responses, Chance Ecologies celebrates the resilience of urban nature, and asks community members to consider their own place in the larger sphere of life.



Hunter's Point South



Flushing River



Newtown Creek



Listening to Dutch Kills



Ross Martin/La Plaza Cultural Ross Martin: "I've personally produced several drawings and musings about La Plaza, my involvement, and interactions with the many diverse people I've worked with or come across in the space; El Sueño/The Dream was my first, though, and the one I'm most proud of. Frankly, I'm obsessed with this half acre of urban detritus turned oasis and continue to evolve my expressions of it. But no matter how skilled I manage to get at producing images and verse, I always return to the rough beginnings and marvel at how far we've come, how much we've accomplished, and how successfully we've realized El Sueño/The Dream."

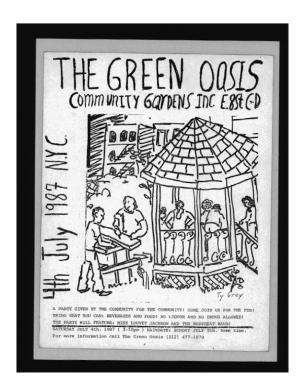


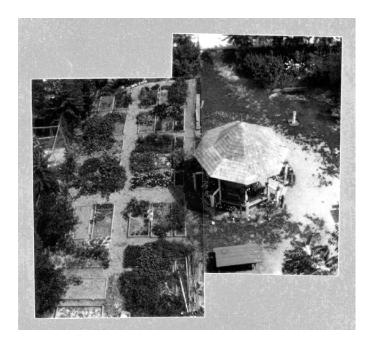
13-Green Oasis Garden

Green Oasis Garden The New York City neighborhood known as the East Village experienced massive arson and destruction during the 1960s and 1970s. The area had been compared to Dresden, Germany after World War II. Rubble from bulldozed buildings lay in mounds, and garbage accumulated. Cars were abandoned. Rats were rampant. Drug use reached epidemic proportions. Drugs and crime made the neighborhood unsafe, but few areas were worse than the neighborhood east of Avenue B.

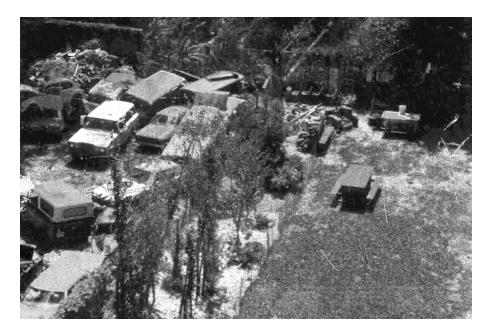
Normand Valle moved to East Seventh Street between Avenues C and D. From his window, he looked down upon one of these blighted lots, and decided to do something about it. In 1981, Valle, an ex-Marine, and his life partner. Revnaldo Arenas, began to undo the mess one brick and one piece of garbage at a time. At the same time. Gilbert Ingram who lived on 8th Street next to the vacant lot had taken control of another piece of that same large lot, creating a sculpture garden where he carved found wood and stone and hosted friends and neighbors who dropped by for barbecues and sculpting lessons. Both gardens engaged neighborhood children to help with the clean-up and ultimate creation of a combined garden with communal and private vegetable plots; beehives; a grape arbor; a koi pond; dozens of now huge trees, flower beds of perennials and annuals and an iconic gazebo. Thus were Green Oasis and Gilbert's Sculpture Gardens born.

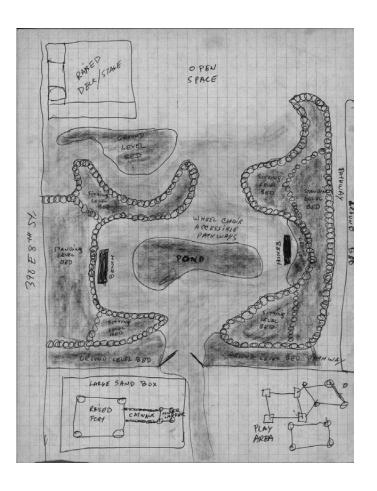
From the beginning, the sister gardens' mission has been to provide a safe, green haven for all people, but especially for the children who lived in that inhospitable environment. Mr. Arenas was particularly interested in the theater, so theatrical events abounded. Plays for children were written and performed. The first deneration of Nuvorican poets read poetry: music was performed: the well-known Butterfly Release ceremony was held here during the all-garden pageant The Rites of Spring until its demise in 2006. We know that this bountiful space can, and has, changed lives. Though Mr. Valle, Mr. Arenas and Mr. Ingram are no longer living, their vision prospers, and their gift, given to countless neighborhood residents and visitors, continues to give.

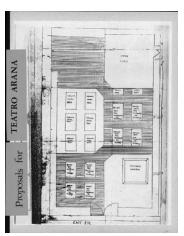






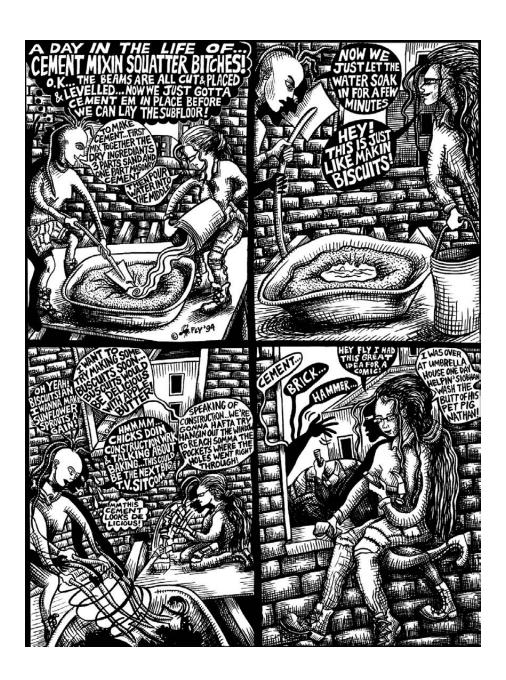






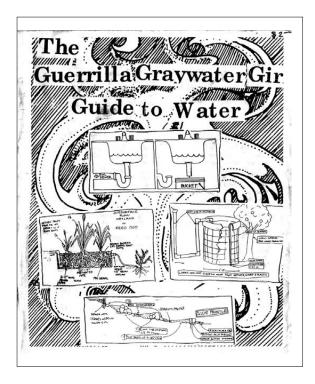


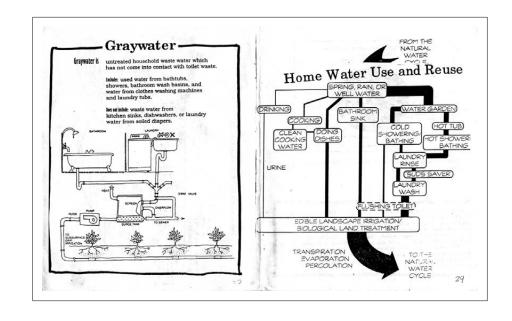
<u>Fly</u>

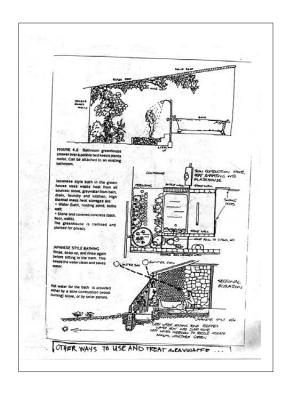








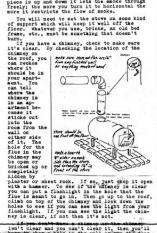




A STOVE FOR YOUR SQUAT When a wood store out of an oil drum what it to do is make two holes in it. You hole to put the wood in, with a door



3



isn't clear and you can't clear it, then you'll have to chope hole in the wall or run the flue pipe out the window. In either case, the flue should go all the way up and past the roof by five feet.

Featuring work by:

Catherine Grau + Nathan Kensinger, Fly, Green Oasis Garden, George Bliss, Guerrilla Graywater Girls, Hackett, John Szot, Kotti & Co, Life Is Free, LOT-EK, Marwan Kaabour, Mohamed Nahleh, Nina Cooke John, Nof Nathansohn, Ross Martin/La Plaza Cultural, Seedhead and Xavier Delory.

Curated by Renan Teuman and organized by Renan Teuman and Steven Englander

Zine

Yi Ting Chen

We would like to thank the following for their invaluable help with this exhibition:

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DESIGN WITHOUT AUTHORITY

May 19 — June 11, 2023

OPENING:

Friday, May 19, 6 pm

VIEWING HOURS:

Fri — Sun, 1 pm — 5 pm

Screening:

Saturday, May 27, 7 pm

DEVASTATING SOUNDWORKS Presents SQUAT or ROT

ABC No Rio In Exile at C-Squat/ Museum Of Reclaimed Urban Space 155 Avenue C NYC

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